

# Open Gym

## Overview

Is your school looking for ways to increase physical activity before or after school? Consider hosting open gym! Typically, open gym is unstructured activity time where the gymnasium is available to students, families, and/or community members to play pick-up sports such as basketball or volleyball, participate in fitness stations, run laps, etc. Hosting open gym takes minimal resources and requires little planning, but it can significantly increase daily physical activity opportunities.



## Take Action

Hosting open gym at your school allows for a safe space for students to be physically active, no matter their skill level. Here are some ideas to host open gym at your school:

- Meet with your school administrators and school health team to secure their support and determine the feasibility of hosting open gym.
- Is the gym available before or after school?
- If it's not, are there other spaces that are available?
- Who will supervise students?
- How does hosting open gym affect other school staff members, such as custodial or athletics staff?

- Are there times when students are already at school, but sitting around? Make that time open gym time!
- Will open gym be every day or a few times per week?
- When activities take place in a confined space, safety must be carefully considered. Use cones, tape or other signage to designate where equipment may be used and how.
- Consider setting up stations that focus skills students are working on in PE class.
- Switch it up! Host some open gyms days that are less structured and others that are group competitions (e.g. compete to complete a Or, host special open gym days with a basketball shoot out, dodgeball tournament, etc.
- Have basic equipment available such as hula hoops, jump ropes, bean bags, scooters, resistance bands and exercise mats.
- to purchase equipment for open gym!

## Tips



Starting small is ok! Host open gym just once per week for a month and see how it goes.



Offer a variety of different physical activity opportunities and utilize outside and inside space.



Play upbeat music. Make it fun!



Encourage staff members to attend open gym to show their support, even if they're not the ones supervising.



Promote open gym through your school website/social media, flyers, school announcements, all-calls and newsletters. Ask teachers to announce open gym opportunities at the beginning of class and see if coaches will promote open gym to their athletes during the off-season.



Make available equipment appropriate for various ages that may participate. Schedule some days for younger students and other days for older students to make planning easier.



Engage volunteers in your network who have skills or interests that complement your needs.

## Additional Resources

[Example Open Gym Rules \(YMCA\)](#)

## Related Activities

### Active Indoor Recess

Are your students restless from being cooped up inside due to rain or cold? Active indoor recess is a great way to get physically moving, regardless of space or equipment constraints.

### Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs

A Comprehensive School Physical Activity Plan (CSPAP) is a multi-component approach for schools to provide opportunities for students to be physically active for 60 minutes each day.

### Intramural Programs & Activity Clubs

Intramural programs and activity clubs allow students to experience a variety of physical activity and games that will contribute to an active and healthy lifestyle without

### Open Facility to Community - Joint Use Agreements

Many communities lack spaces and equipment for physical activity. Opening facilities outside of school hours can provide a safe and familiar

the competitiveness that comes with traditional team sports.

place for students and their families to be active!

